

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

Commercial broadcasting has gone through stunning negative changes in recent years, as deregulation and consolidation have shifted the balance of power to a small handful of companies with interests and investments spread across the media landscape. We now live in a world dominated by profit-driven media conglomerates more interested in delivering viewers to advertisers than in serving the needs of the public.

Across the country, broadcast public affairs programs that address local concerns are almost non-existent; many communities can't even expect any coverage of their local elections on TV.

Independent, critical and genuinely representative media are crucial to a healthy democracy; without them, citizens lose the means to control and participate in the public debate that sets the nation's political agenda. Sadly, this is already happening: In the absence of an effective regulatory agency, corporate control of the media is damaging our democracy.

This country's airwaves belong to the American people, and the FCC is supposed to manage them in the public interest.